3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13



The hare is not carried over the shoulder, but has a ceremonial conveyance slung on poles (*owanda*) which are supported on the shoulders of two or even four men.

Laying the evil of a village on a goat, which is then driven out to die, is an Umbundu custom. The scapegoat ceremony has a cleansing function similar in purpose to the rekindling of fire for the community. Cavazzi pictured and described the scapegoat ceremony in the seventeenth century, and Ngonga informed me that he saw the rite twenty years ago.

### PROHIBITIONS AND OMENS

There is a taboo against killing *oka kuhu*, which is the yellow-backed duiker. When Ngonga was sick he was forbidden to eat the flesh of the duiker (*ombambi*); neither is this flesh to be eaten by people who suffer from dizziness. In former days women were not allowed to eat eggs. The flesh of sheep and goats is said to be indigestible for children between the ages of three and six years. The flesh of the lion, leopard, and hyena is forbidden as food for the king, but other people may eat it. The king is in fact forbidden to eat the flesh of any animal which has paws; neither may he eat flesh of the bush buck. A medicine-man must not eat flesh of a dog except before a ceremony for curing the sick. The taboo against dog's flesh applies also to the diet of a king.

A woman must not step over the legs of a male, neither must a man step over the legs of a woman; for to do so causes weakness of the knees. A man or woman may step over the legs of a child.

Omens are numerous. It is unfortunate to see a snake holding a frog, and the person who observes this should go to the medicine-man at once. When going to a village to be tried by the chief it is bad to meet some one who is carrying a bark rope, as this indicates binding and punishment. If a person who is setting out from home meets a woman carrying corn meal or any other white substance, he or she must take a little of the meal, whiten the face, and all will be well. A fly in the mouth is a good sign, because the fly knows where meat is to be obtained and is trying to lead the way.

A stranger visiting a village is pleased when a dog is the first animal to enter the guest house. Dogs are fed, so the entry of a dog is a sign that the visitor will receive food. On the contrary, the appearance of a goat is a bad omen, because goats are not fed; they pick up a frugal living as best they can. Other prohibitions and omens have been mentioned in discussing the pregnancy of women.